

SMALL MOUTH SOUNDS

The Mode of The Play

This is not your typical show, in that the information you get about the characters, and the story, are not text driven. While this show does have traditional dialogue that you see in most plays, much of the narrative is driven by the physical life and body language of the actors. Every performer is a 'lead' in that every character appears onstage for essentially the same amount of time, but they may not say a word for many pages. In fact, most of the characters lack dialogue for pages at a time.

Because of this, we are looking for performers who feel confident in their sense of physical storytelling. While you don't need to be an expert in pantomime, clown or commedia dell'arte, having a developed sense of your physicality will be prioritized in auditions.

Auditions

Auditions will consist of a movement score created by each individual actor at the time of the audition. You will receive instructions when you arrive at the audition, so there will be nothing to prepare for this section, just be prepared to move.

There are also sides attached. I ask that you prepare one of these, knowing that I may ask you to stay and cold read another, possibly with another actor. You can prepare any of these sides that you like, but I ask that you choose the one you identify with the most. All of the characters in the play are not represented by these sides. Some of them have very few spoken lines at all.

Character Descriptions

The TEACHER can be any gender. The voice is amplified through a microphone. And. Pauses A lot at. Odd moments. The teacher speaks the most, and may or may not actually be visible.

JOAN, middle-aged, wears a lot of clothes and jewelry from India. She is a therapist and sex educator in colleges, high schools, and in private practice with couples. She likes to focus on pleasure rather than on fear or "don'ts." She is also incredibly, mind-bendingly, soul-crushingly angry and she has been since about the age of six, when her parents got divorced and her mother told her, "Daddy doesn't love us enough." Now, she meditates and does yoga. At times, her rage still bubbles on the surface in little ways, in spite of her efforts to breathe through it. She might compliment you on a haircut when you know it's terrible.. She might spend five minutes brushing her teeth. She might write a really mean anonymous comment on a blog. She might leave, just when you need her the most.

JUDY, middle-aged, is Joan's partner. She works at O magazine as a top editor in the art department- a few times a year, she finds herself in the same room with Oprah. She's the kind of person who only needs four hours of sleep per night. She gets a lot of emails. She wakes up and walks on the treadmill while watching Fox News. She finds that building up a healthy rage in the morning helps her greet the day. She likes control. She likes to be in control of her image. She makes a good living. She eats a lot of grilled fish. She's direct. She grew up with three brothers. She always felt she had to prove herself equal to the boys. She has had a recent

diagnosis of ovarian cancer, and, as the doctor said, she "will not have a good outcome." This is a serious problem for her sense of control. Her soft spot is Joan. She and Joan met at a Buddhist lecture series in Manhattan. Now, she's not really that into spirituality anymore, knows she should meditate, never has the time, but she's at this retreat because, simply put, she loves Joan madly. She loves how Joan eats. She loves how Joan smells. She loves the heat Joan gives off when she sleeps. She is very afraid Joan will leave, just when she needs Joan the most.

ALICIA, twenties or thirties, is from Southern California. She is the kind of person who manages to make a lot of noise even when she's "in silence." She has zippers on her clothes and bag. She has wrappers that must be unwrapped. She has bracelets that jangle. She sips loudly. She breathes loudly. She has shoes with heels that click. It's because she likes being watched. She was a child actor and beauty pageant star. Most recently, she was in a commercial for a nationwide wireless company, where her role was to act really surprised and say, "Gotcha!" These days, Alicia gets her performance fix by doing karaoke alone. Up 'till a few months ago, she was with Fred. Fred was a hedge fund guy who liked Alicia because she seemed unmoored enough to bend to his will. She was, and things worked for a very long time. But then Fred got bored of being with somebody who would bend to his will. (Alicia believes Fred had undiagnosed ADHD.) Finally, Fred kicked her out. It was around then that a therapist she'd started seeing suggested she develop a spiritual practice. She doesn't have a lot of experience with any of this. But she needs something, anything, actually, to take away the pain of living without Fred, whom she still loves desperately, achingly, utterly. (Shame.) She still spends a lot of time online stalking Fred. She's looking for something- or somebody- to make her feel okay again.

NED, somewhere in his forties, has had a severe run of bad luck worse than the worst country-western song. Here's what happened. First, Ned, ever the outdoor enthusiast, went rock climbing to try to clear his head, and he ended up falling and cracking his skull in eight places. He spent two years in and out of the hospital, during which time his identity was stolen, his house burned down due to electrical problems, and his wife, Dawn started sleeping with Ned's younger brother, Charlie. Charlie, a failed musician with a past heroin addiction who now sings in a band called Seedlings at kiddie music classes and birthday parties. Pretty soon, Dawn and Charlie had fixed up the house, kicked Ned out of it, and were living together with the kids. Then things got worse. Ned's parents died. Then he started drinking. He tried to stop by joining AA. Then his sponsor, Elijah, went off his meds and walked into traffic on the Long Island Expressway. Soon after that, Ned's dog was hit by a car too. Ned bought a pitcher of kerosene and was about to burndown Charlie and Dawn's House, when something stopped him. A little voice inside. It told him there was another path. And led him to study a variety of meditation, self-helpy, new agey books, which helped him avoid committing homicide. And now, for the very first time, he has saved up enough money to go on a retreat - this particular retreat with this particular teacher, whom he greatly admires. This year, Charlie and Dawn are expecting a kid. Ned is contemplating homicide again.

RODNEY, mid-thirties, ageless, fit, gorgeous, grew up in the Pacific Northwest, and teaches yoga in New York and the Hamptons (in the summer). He is married to a woman named Nadine who also teaches yoga. Rodney and Nadine have had articles about them in various local yoga magazines and are designing a line of vegan bags, wallets, and jewelry together, made of a substance that looks exactly like real leather. Rodney wears lots of man-jewelry but he is pulling it off. Rodney met Nadine because she was his student. The truth is, Rodney has had sex with a bunch of his students over the years- both before and after being married to Nadine. In fact, he

started his own yoga practice after being kicked out of one in the Bay Area due to sexual harassment. He pursues these women in part because once he has something, he never wants it anymore. He thought Nadine was different because she was extra-gorgeous and had that rich-person inaccessible thing that really got under his skin. Also, she had a trust fund which enhanced his East Coast yoga studio. Now he and Nadine have not had sex in three years. When they try to talk about it, Nadine just bursts into tears and runs out of the room. He has convinced himself that the kindest thing is to stay with Nadine, who is fragile. The truth is, all of the sex with young nubile yogis is really about his panicky fear of aging and death. Nadine makes him feel trapped, and this reminds him he's going to get old and die. His man jewelry does not include a wedding ring.

JAN, middle-aged, is from a small town in Finland. He is pale and sweet, with a wide-eyed, continually curious air about him, like a little sprite or a woodland creature. He is a pastor at a small Lutheran church back in Finland, and his church has sent him on a one-year sabbatical to explore religious life around the world and figure out a way to appeal to more of the Finnish people, who have become increasingly secular. He always wears a small backpack, in which he carries a bottle of water, trail mix, sunblock, and other necessities. He does exercises in the morning for his health. Jan likes to be prepared. He came to religion later in life, after a personal tragedy - a son who died after a prolonged and terrible illness at the age of six. Jan's wife then moved to South America to study Argentinian tango. Jan, who had been working in advertising, went back to school to study religion and philosophy, hoping that it might help him understand why things happen the way they do. It didn't explain much, but it did give him a new community. And a sense of purpose, to help others. Still, sometimes at night, when he starts to suspect he really can do nothing to help people, he wakes up seized with a sense of panic that freezes him like a solid wood board. He waits all night for the sun to come up, too scared to move a muscle. Then he takes a lot, lot, lot of pharmaceuticals and tries not to fall asleep in the middle of his sermon the next day. He misses his son. He is hoping maybe this retreat will have an answer for him, where more traditional religious experiences have failed. He also greatly overestimated his familiarity with the English language.